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daughters or grand-daughters as well as for their own daughters. In fact, it increases the reputation of a man of substance to be able to hold such a ceremony. He is said to 'dance the chisungu' of so-and-so (*ukumucindila icisungu*).

The mistress of the ceremonies (*nacimbusa*).[1] The *nacimbusa* organizes the rites, leads the dances and songs, and arranges for the making of the pottery and other emblems required. She is considered to perform a very important service. It is work that demands a detailed knowledge of ritual, industry in carrying through long and even arduous tasks, organizing ability, tact and personality. A successful *nacimbusa* probably has unusual intellectual ability as well as leadership and the power to attract women from surrounding villages to attend a ceremony and to keep a body of helpers alert and interested for some weeks. The *nacimbusa* is usually an elderly woman who has proved herself to be a successful midwife. The same terms are used for both roles. She is commonly, though not by means always, a member of the royal clan, and there is a tendency for the office to be hereditary. A *nacimbusa* will teach the secrets of the chisungu to her brother's daughter, to whom she owes special obligations, and from whom she can demand service, and she may also teach them to her own daughter. But mere heredity is not enough. A young woman must build up a reputation sufficient to win the confidence of parents so that they will call her in to 'dance their daughters' for them. To do this she must show assiduity in attending local ceremonies and attach herself as a special helper to the *nacimbusa*. She must show capacity and personality, and make a name for herself as a successful midwife. I heard from one old woman that a form of initiation of young *banacimbusa* took place in the old days, and that they were rubbed with medicine and paid an initiation fee, but this account was not substantiated.

The *banacimbusa* are treated with great consideration by other women in the community. In the old days they were allowed to wear a feather head-dress (*ngala*), which was reserved for certain chiefs and hereditary counsellors. They were given respect at a chief's court and have to report the carrying out of each chisungu ceremony to the chief. I am not sure whether this is still done at

[1] The plural prefix for nouns describing persons is 'ba'. Hence *banacimbusa*, or *banacisungu*.

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with uxorilocal residence than in a patrilineal one with patrilocal residence. The pivoted relationships of a Bemba village are those based on the woman and not on the man, as we have explained.

The position of the senior women in the chisungu also reflects their activities in everyday life. The *nacimbusa* is the midwife. She attends the childbed of the girls she has 'danced'. She provides the magic which will enable them to come safely through the ordeal. She divines to find out which ancestral spirit is being born. She listens to confessions of adultery, which are often forced, if there is delay or difficulty in the birth of the baby. It depends on her to conceal or tell to the in-laws of any real or supposed bad behaviour of the girl, or any ill-omened birth. Did the girl cry out in her pains? Did she relax her efforts and 'kill' the child by collapsing from the exhausting squatting position, thought necessary during childbirth, to the floor while the child's head was about to appear? Was the baby born feet foremost? All these facts can be revealed or concealed by the *nacimbusa*.

The mistress of the ceremonies often becomes the protector (*mbosua*), or, as we might say, the god-mother of the child. In the old days she gave permission for the resumption of sex relations between husband and wife after the birth and gave advice on the many magic precautions that were needed to protect the young child. She had the right to intervene and correct. Thus the girl child delivered and guarded by the *nacimbusa* was watched by her during her growth to womanhood. She confessed her peccadilloes to the same woman at her chisungu; received admonition in her final congratulation ceremony, and remained in close relation with the *nacimbusa* and her helpers throughout her married life. It is, I think, significant that the mothers sing about giving over their girls to the *nacimbusa*. The mother is tender and indulgent, but the *nacimbusa* corrects. The mother and daughter cannot easily talk of sex matters together, but the grandmother, probably also herself a *nacimbusa*, or some non-related midwife is not limited in this way.

It is because the girl has been 'danced' and is magically changed; because she has been 'taught' and has assumed a position in a hierarchy of women and has the protection of the *nacimbusa* of her district that she is no longer a weed, a piece of rubbish or an unfired pot.

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881 562 578 match the ritual hostility between the sexes shown in some other initiation or marriage rites.[1]

Traces of hostility are revealed in the man's attitude to the chisungu. At least one Bemba man told me that unless the rites were performed 'our wives will hate us and give us no respect'. I have also heard remarks from women which seem to show that they are anxious lest they alienate the husbands attracted to the matrilineage. For instance, girls are instructed not to cry out in childbirth [844] 'because it is a thing of shame. These are the secret things of women. Because the man will hear and will say "It is I who gave her that belly. I am ashamed because other women don't cry out like that".'

881 611 842 171 To conclude, Bemba evidence supports the suggestion that there is a connection between matriliny and girls' initiation ceremonies which emphasize the importance of fertility. In any society in which it is believed that women provide all the physical substance from which the foetus is formed, this would be natural; it is the case in Bemba society. Moreover, the connection between matriliny and girls' initiation ceremonies has been observed in a number of other African communities.[2]

881 611 593 I have suggested that there are also other possible associations, between matriliny characterized by absence of marriage payment, for instance, and instability of marriage with anxieties and taboos centring round the beginning of married life. A further association is suggested between matriliny combined with uxorilocal marriage, and initial inferiority of the young husband combined with compensating honours given him in the rituals of marriage or initiation. I have also suggested, very tentatively indeed, that in this particular matrilineal society there may be a connection between the lack of open hostility between the sexes and an unconscious feeling of guilt at robbing the man of his children, which is expressed in fears on the part of the women that the men will leave them, and on the part of the men that their wives will not respect them unless taught to do so by the chisungu.

[1] Cf. M. Gluckman, 'The role of the sexes in the Wiko circumcision ceremonies', in *Social Structure* edited by M. Fortes, 1949, and P. Mayer, 'Privileged obstruction of marriage rites among the Gusii', in a paper read to the Royal Anthropological Institute, 1950.

[2] See Appendix A for a further discussion on this point.